

LAWRENCE WALLACE, )  
)  
Plaintiff, )  
)  
v. ) No. 4:12CV2291 JAR  
)  
ST. LOUIS CITY JUSTICE )  
CENTER, et al., )  
)  
Defendants. )

This matter is before the Court upon the motion of plaintiff (registration no. 38025-044), an inmate at the Canaan United States Penitentiary in Waymart, Pennsylvania, for leave to commence this action without payment of the required filing fee. For the reasons stated below, the Court finds that plaintiff does not have sufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee and will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$2.70. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). Furthermore, based upon a review of the complaint, the Court finds that the complaint should be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has

insufficient funds in his or her prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 percent of the greater of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account, or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period. After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, until the filing fee is fully paid. Id.

Plaintiff has submitted an affidavit and a certified copy of his prison account statement for the six-month period immediately preceding the submission of his complaint. A review of plaintiff's account indicates an average monthly deposit of \$13.49, and an average monthly balance of \$3.04. Plaintiff has insufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee. Accordingly, the Court will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$2.70, which is 20 percent of plaintiff's average monthly deposit.

### **28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if the action is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from

such relief. An action is frivolous if it “lacks an arguable basis in either law or fact.” Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989). An action is malicious if it is undertaken for the purpose of harassing the named defendants and not for the purpose of vindicating a cognizable right. Spencer v. Rhodes, 656 F. Supp. 458, 461-63 (E.D.N.C. 1987), aff’d 826 F.2d 1059 (4th Cir. 1987).

To determine whether an action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the Court must engage in a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must identify the allegations in the complaint that are not entitled to the assumption of truth. Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950-51 (2009). These include “legal conclusions” and “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements.” Id. at 1949. Second, the Court must determine whether the complaint states a plausible claim for relief. Id. at 1950-51. This is a “context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” Id. at 1950. The plaintiff is required to plead facts that show more than the “mere possibility of misconduct.” Id. The Court must review the factual allegations in the complaint “to determine if they plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief.” Id. at 1951. When faced with alternative explanations for the alleged misconduct, the Court may exercise its judgment in determining whether plaintiff’s

conclusion is the most plausible or whether it is more likely that no misconduct occurred. Id. at 1950, 51-52.

### **The Complaint**

Plaintiff, an inmate at the Canaan United States Penitentiary in Waymart, Pennsylvania, brings this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging violations of his civil rights during his incarceration at the St. Louis City Justice Center in September of 2011. Named as defendants are: the St. Louis City Justice Center; L. Edward; R. Moore; T. Harry; Unknown Sims; T. Henderson; and Federal U.S. Marshal.

Plaintiff asserts that a guard at the St. Louis City Justice Center, defendant Sims, was bringing drugs into the Justice Center to two inmates, Robert Scott and Larry Hamilton. Plaintiff alleges that Sims and Scott were having a sexual relationship, and that Sims told Hamilton and Scott that plaintiff had "snitched" on friends and family members of Hamilton's. Plaintiff claims that Scott and Hamilton put a "hit" out on his life as a result of Sims' sharing of confidential information about plaintiff's FBI informant status.

Plaintiff claims that he was "jumped" on September 24, 2011, while being housed by the Feds (the U.S. Marshals) at the St. Louis City Justice Center. He claims his attackers were inmates Larry Hamilton and D. Jackson. Plaintiff claims that he

was severely beaten and stabbed and he has attached several medical records, IRRs and grievances to his complaint in support of his claim.

Plaintiff alleges that despite knowledge of known enemies, on May 31, 2012, he was sent back to the St. Louis City Justice Center and housed in 3-D Pod with D. Jackson, one of his attackers. As of the time of the filing of his complaint, in December of 2012, plaintiff claims he had not been moved from 3-D Pod despite the filing of numerous grievances to defendants R. Moore and T. Henderson, workers at the Justice Center. Plaintiff has not indicated whether he has suffered any alleged harm since his incarceration at the City Justice Center after May of 2012.

Plaintiff seeks monetary damages in his complaint.

### **Discussion**

The Court has reviewed the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915 and believes that, although plaintiff may be able to assert a claim based upon the denial of his Constitutional rights, he has failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted at this time, because the complaint is silent as to whether he is suing the named defendants in their official and/or individual capacities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The complaint is silent as to whether defendants are being sued in their official or individual capacities. Where a “complaint is silent about the capacity in which [plaintiff] is suing defendant, [a district court must] interpret the complaint as including only official-capacity claims.” Egerdahl v. Hibbing Community College, 72 F.3d 615, 619 (8th Cir.1995); Nix v. Norman, 879 F.2d 429, 431 (8th

Taking into consideration the fact that plaintiff is proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis, the Court will grant him time to file an amended complaint on a Court form, setting forth the capacity (i.e., official and/or individual) in which he is suing each of the named defendants. Moreover, because the Court is allowing plaintiff to amend his complaint, it will take no action as to the named defendants at this time.<sup>2</sup>

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Cir. 1989). Naming a government official in his or her official capacity is the equivalent of naming the government entity that employs the official. To state a claim against a municipality or a government official in his or her official capacity, plaintiff must allege that a policy or custom of the municipality is responsible for the alleged constitutional violation. Monell v. Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658, 690-91 (1978). The instant complaint does not contain any allegations that a policy or custom of a municipality was responsible for the alleged violations of plaintiff's constitutional rights. As a result, the complaint, as it stands, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted against the individual defendants.

Moreover, plaintiff's claim against St. Louis City Justice Center is legally frivolous because the Justice Center is not a suable entity. Ketchum v. City of West Memphis, Ark., 974 F.2d 81, 82 (8th Cir. 1992) (departments or subdivisions of local government are "not juridical entities suable as such."); Catlett v. Jefferson County, 299 F. Supp. 2d 967, 968-69 (E.D. Mo. 2004).

<sup>2</sup>Plaintiff has failed to make any allegations against defendant L. Edward or against the Federal U.S. Marshal. "Liability under § 1983 requires a causal link to, and direct responsibility for, the alleged deprivation of rights." Madewell v. Roberts, 909 F.2d 1203, 1208 (8th Cir. 1990); see also Martin v. Sargent, 780 F.2d 1334, 1338 (8th Cir. 1985) (claim not cognizable under § 1983 where plaintiff fails to allege defendant was personally involved in or directly responsible for incidents that injured plaintiff); Boyd v. Knox, 47 F.3d 966, 968 (8th Cir. 1995) (respondeat superior theory inapplicable in § 1983 suits).

Plaintiff is reminded that his amended complaint will supersede his original complaint and will be the only complaint this Court reviews. Thus, plaintiff must include in the "Caption" of the amended complaint the names of all defendants he wishes to sue in this action; in the "Statement of Claim," he must set out, in separate numbered paragraphs, specific facts against each named defendant, *and he must state whether he is suing each defendant in his individual and/or official capacity*; and in the "Relief" section, he must briefly set out what he wants the Court to do for him. Plaintiff must also sign the amended complaint.

In accordance with the foregoing,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis [Doc. #2] is **GRANTED**.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the plaintiff shall pay an initial filing fee of \$2.70 within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order. Plaintiff is instructed to make his remittance payable to "Clerk, United States District Court," and to include upon it: (1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

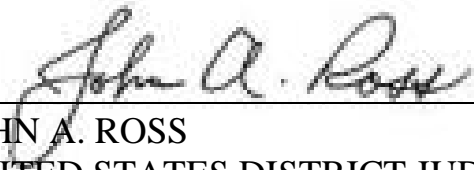
**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk shall not issue process or cause process to issue upon the complaint at this time.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that plaintiff shall file an amended complaint within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, in accordance with the specific instructions set forth above.<sup>3</sup>

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk shall mail to plaintiff the Court's form for filing a complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that plaintiff's failure to amend his complaint in accordance with this Court's instructions will result in the dismissal of this action, without prejudice and without further notice to him.

Dated this 19th day of March, 2013.

  
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JOHN A. ROSS  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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<sup>3</sup>For his amended complaint, plaintiff shall use the court-provided form for filing a complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.